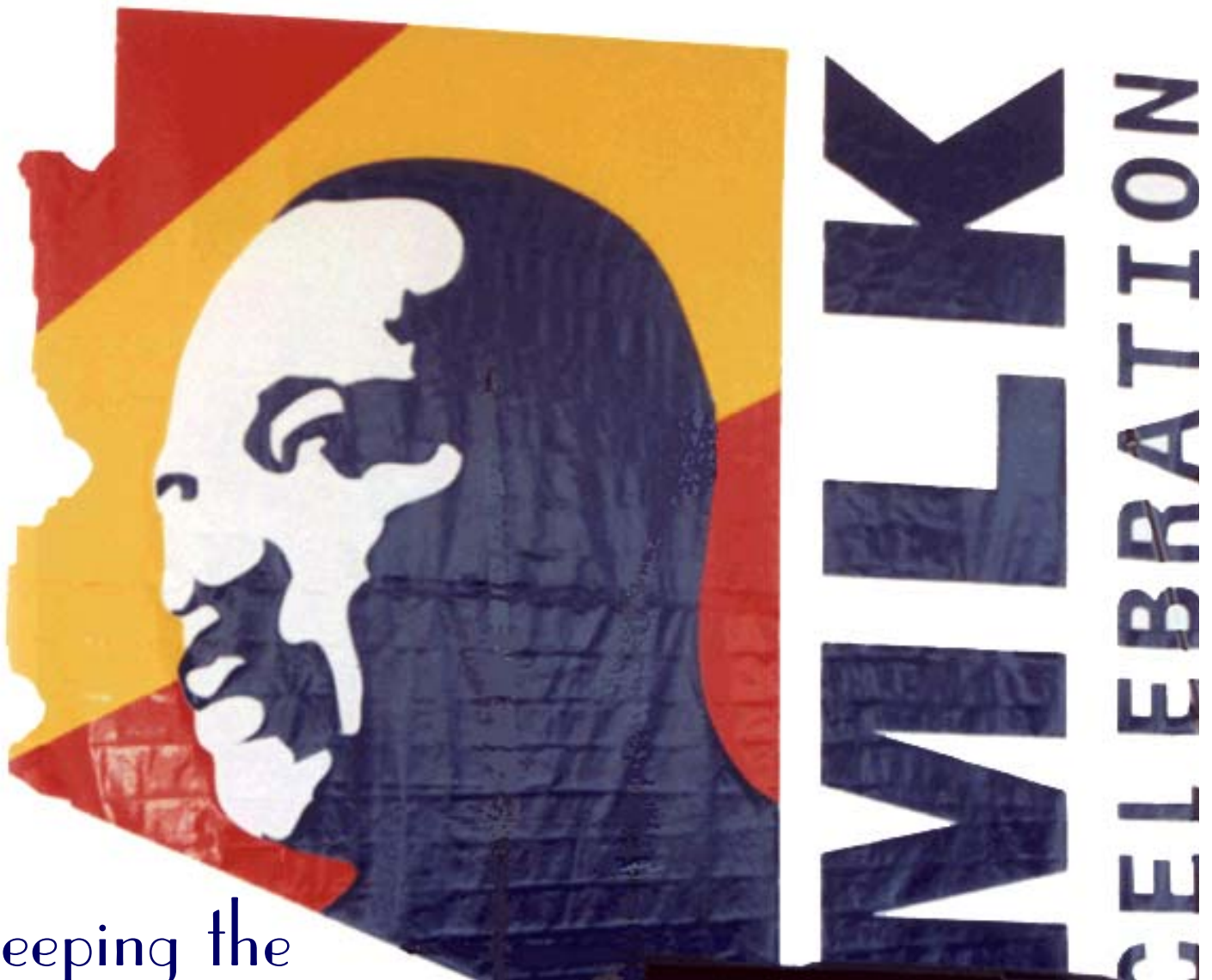


THE EBONY CACTUS magazine

Vol. 2. No. 2

January 20, 2003

A New Perspective on Business



Keeping the
Dream Alive!

Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in The City of Phoenix

www.TheEbonyCactus.com
Making it Happen!

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**We're Behind The Scene
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Mention you saw this in The Ebony Cactus

Published twice monthly, The Ebony Cactus is a new concept internet magazine that is sent directly to the reader. Created in PDF format, the magazine can be viewed equally well by both Macintosh and P.C. users. Hard copies made by the reader retain the exact format as seen on the screen. Past issues are archived at www.TheEbonyCactus.com.

Who reads The Ebony Cactus?

- Currently, the monthly readership is about 32,000. The following is a partial listing of where The Ebony Cactus is read: Motorola, Intel, Aztec Engineering, Evans and Kuhns, First Institutional Baptist Church, Southminster Presbyterian Church, Arizona State University, The Thunderbird Graduate School of International Management, Arizona State University West, Maricopa County Community Colleges, University of Arizona, University of California Davis, Palomar College (San Diego), Los Angeles Unified School District, Berkeley County South Carolina School District, Medical University of South Carolina, The J. Paul Getty Trust, University of Phoenix, Flagler Hospital (Florida), San Francisco State University, Nokia, City of Phoenix, Arizona State Government offices, Roosevelt School District, South Western Bell(TX), BellSouth (Atlanta,GA), NTL.com (UK)/ Arizona, California, Nevada, Minnesota, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Kansas, Oklahoma, Washington State, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina Japan, Belgium, United Kingdom, Japan and South Africa.
- 99% use computers
- 99% use the internet
- 58% have family incomes exceeding 50K (www.census.gov)
- 35% have family incomes exceeding 75K (www.census.gov)
- 42% hold a bachelors degree or greater (www.census.gov)

Who is Profiled in The Ebony Cactus?

The Ebony Cactus magazine presents in-depth interviews with a wide variety of successful businesses. We seek to look beyond the superficial to see how they work and why they succeed. Non-Profit organizations such as Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Planned Parenthood and First Institutional Baptist Church with strong business backgrounds and programs of interest to the African American Community have also been profiled. In addition, we utilize a cadre of professionals to present detailed lectures on business management. **Finally, the Ebony Cactus seeks to provide you information on new business opportunities before they come over the horizon.**

The Ebony Cactus magazine's definition of business includes individuals who sell their services for a fee. In other words, any one who earns a living, is in business. This unique perspective allows The Ebony Cactus to provide additional insights on individual success, for example the spotlight on Ricky Colter in the January 1st issue.

Expanding concept of individual success, The Ebony Cactus also presents the Success 101 seminar series. In success 101, notable achievers discuss their personal "keys to success." This conversation between the writer and the reader explores those nuances of experience that are often lost, but are now recorded here for posterity.

Should I advertise in The Ebony Cactus magazine?

Yes, you should. Your full color advertisement in The Ebony Cactus will be seen by thousands of potential customers world wide who possess the resources and the need to use your products and services (see demographics). A service unique in the nation, the nature of the Ebony Cactus encourages it to rapidly propagate across the globe through "Word of Net." The higher the quality of information in the magazine, the more it is passed along for more eyes to see. Your quality advertisement will synergistically add to the overall value of the of the magazine thus increasing the number of individuals that will see your services.



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Sleep is the Cousin of Death - Zairian Proverb

Last month I expressed that this was no time to sleep and that we all had jobs to do. I further implied we all needed to ascend to increasingly difficult business challenges. In my personal cogitation on the life and times of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., I often speculate to what demise America would have suffered in if he'd decided to sleep instead of stir. What if his mind had been discouraged from good deed doing? What if he relinquished all rights as the appointed leader of the day to an eager, young and restless Jesse Jackson? Would Rev. Jackson so systematically have taken a generation of believers and achievers to the next level as did the late Dr. King? Maybe, maybe not. King Solomon once said that everything has a season. Therefore, let us know and believe that King's slumber came by force. No doubt weary, when it was his season he did not sleep. Dr. King labored tirelessly until his job was done.

In a recent conversation I was reminded that King was viciously stabbed near the heart while in New York. It was a brutal attack, but he did survive it. Through it all he did not fail to extend himself once again to uplift humankind. Resolute in the cause of bringing about equality and social justice, he remained focused on his agenda. Sleep he knew not. Therefore, I believe that aligning business goals with King's dream is but one of our many jobs in business to do. He, to be sure, had an agenda (remember, it's fine to keep a few things under ones hat as long as one is not malicious).

We are still in a recessionary period. In this New Economy, corporation trailblazers, economists, financial gurus and the like are charged with unveiling new innovations that will steer their businesses toward a competitive advantage. Some companies have decided to retain sleepers. They will most certainly wait to see how the tide will turn within the market before making any uncomfortable changes. In that case, death will overtake them. Only those who answer the call of challenge will make it through this dizzying time of uncertain financial sluggishness.

For those who choose not to sleep, in this issue I am delighted to present to you a lecture on Selling Products on the Internet, an untamed frontier. There is also information on the Southwestern Fatherhood Conference which will convene in February, the 4th Annual Black Heritage Celebration in Downtown Phoenix, the monthly business mixer- First Friday Phoenix and Club U a new approach to social and business interaction. In addition, we've incorporated a myriad of business communications and interviews gathered from across the country. I hope you'll enjoy and find this issue useful to your personal needs. Remember, if you sleep you may not awaken soon enough to see the dream materialize. Onward!

Stevie Wonder's tribute to Martin Luther King, forever changed how African American's sing "Happy Birthday." But in this 39th year since King's "I have a dream" speech, are we truly anywhere near that ideal state where we are judged by the content of our character not the color of our skin? In this author's opinion, regrettably not. It seems the majority of the country (largely because they rarely come in social contact with Black folks), truly believe this is a color blind society. They are shocked when a Trent Lott pops up and refuse to believe there are many more like him out there (you know denial is not a long river in Africa). More importantly, they can't understand why Blacks are always complaining about something that no longer exists to them, racism.



Believe it or not, there is an entire political party whose civil rights policies are built upon the big colorblind lie. If you build your house upon sand it will fall. If you build your policies upon a lie, no matter how well meaning, they will also fall. This party continues to listen to a small cadre of deluded Black individuals who make them feel good by telling them the lie is true. They do this contrary to warnings from the majority of their small but loyal African American membership that these individuals are leading their party down a false path. This desire to only believe what makes them feel good or justified in their actions, also leaves this party hostage to those wolves who like things just as they are and work to conserve the status quo. Then they wonder why the majority of African Americans vote against them even though the other party often (but not always) takes Black votes for granted.

Just imagine if you would, how American politics would change with the simple admission by one particular party that "No, this is not yet and may not be for some time, a colorblind society." Imagine if they were to admit that Blacks who cry racism are not crybabies or seeking an unfair advantage. Consider if they were to develop, pronouncements, policies, and plans to proactively destroy racial disparities instead of using the "they no longer exist" lie as justification to remove what small programs there are that still give minorities a hand up not a hand out. Can you imagine the change in American politics this would cause? There could actually be a contest of ideas, with millions of Black votes going to the deserving winner, not the lesser of two (or three) evils. Just think, Black folks might even join their party in numbers and white racists would no longer be able to hide there. Happy Birthday Dr. King. We are not where you wished us to be, but we are working on it. Enough for now, on with the show.

Advertise in the Ebony Cactus
www.TheEbonyCactus.com



Empowering Women On-Tour Conference coming to Tucson

As the second stop of a year-long regional tour which includes Tucson Arizona, San Francisco and Los Angeles, the El Dorado Hills based non-profit organization, Empowering Women, kicked off their Stockton Conference by hosting a Mixer on Saturday, January 11, 2003.

The Mixer was held at the Residence Inn by Marriott and the event was FREE and Open to the Public with attendees of many cultures and backgrounds. All attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the much anticipated Empowering Women Conference, enjoy refreshments and network with other women in Stockton.

The Stockton conference is scheduled for Saturday, February 8th on Stockton's Klamath Ferry (2894 Monte Diablo Avenue) the Empowering Women Conference will entertain and educate its attendees from the hours of 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. The theme "It's All About You" says it all as it encompasses the entire concept and purpose of the regional conference.

Empowering Women is an organization focused on one distinct goal: to enable women to realize and achieve their true potential. This non-profit organization hosts and produces ongoing events bringing together experts on female issues, inspirational speakers, and leading businesswomen and legislators. These women's conferences and seminars recharge your energy and provide women with a unique chance to meet new people, learn additional life skills and to tap into their personal greatness.

Serving as the Mistress of Ceremonies is Arlonda Pirtle, President & Publisher of the Stockton-based magazine, The Color Pages. "I am very excited and honored to be apart of this

organization (Empowering Women). We hosted our first conference in Sacramento in November, 2002 to rave reviews. I am confident that Stockton will, too, embrace the Empowering Women Conference and concept," says Arlonda.

With many dynamic speakers including Empowering Women's President, Zondra Evans this conference includes an array of interesting and educational subject matters, including Breast Cancer Awareness, Image Enhancement, and Practical Stress Relief Techniques. "I believe that every woman needs a life roadmap and a plan to ensure their success," says Zondra.

Empowering Women will be in Tucson Arizona on March 8, 2003. For additional information, to receive sponsorship and vendor applications contact Empowering Women at 1.888.517.6888 or visit them online at www.Empowering-Women.org.

PUBLIC ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK OUT AT COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS Maricopa Community Colleges Leadership Makes Community Visits



Beginning January 23, 2003, a series of town-hall style events will be held throughout the valley to encourage community feedback to leadership at the Maricopa Community Colleges. The "Community Listening Sessions," are meetings designed to solicit public input on the needs of the communities and how well the community colleges are meeting those needs.

"Our colleges are partners with their communities. This is a chance for the Governing Board, college presidents and people at all leadership levels, to hear from the people who live in the communities we serve," explains incoming Board President Ed Contreras. "It's only through the voices of our constituents that we begin to understand our strengths and weaknesses."

"This is a learning process and before we set directives for the future we need to know what people want and expect from us as their community college," says Dr. Fred Gaskin, Chancellor of the Maricopa Community Colleges. "Enrollment at our colleges is growing and our colleges want to continue to offer programs that meet the evolving needs of our communities."

MCC and more news continued on page 18

Keeping the Dream Alive MLK Day 2003 in the City of Phoenix

There is a change at hand. We can see it in the looks on folk's faces these days. We can hear it in the tone of their voices. We can read it between the lines on the Internet. Change is a coming. There is a storm a brewing. Somewhere over the horizon, there is a storm a brewing. You can feel it in the wind, you know it is there. You just can't see it yet and some just don't want to. There is a storm a brewing. Nothing is certain any more, perhaps the blinders have come off. What we once thought we earned could now be taken away. But with the gathering of the storm, so gather the people across the land. A house built upon a firm foundation will stand and now the people gather to reinforce that foundation. From Washington, D.C. to Phoenix, Arizona, the people come together on this "King Day" to keep the dream alive. To celebrate the victory that was and the victory that will be gained at the end.

"Just because we've got a holiday does not mean the struggle is over!"
Phoenix City Councilman Michael Johnson January 20, 2003

Images from King Day 2003 in the City of Phoenix, Arizona.



The People Gather



Congressman Ed Pastor interviewed by Univision.



State Representative Leah Landrum-Taylor addresses the audience.

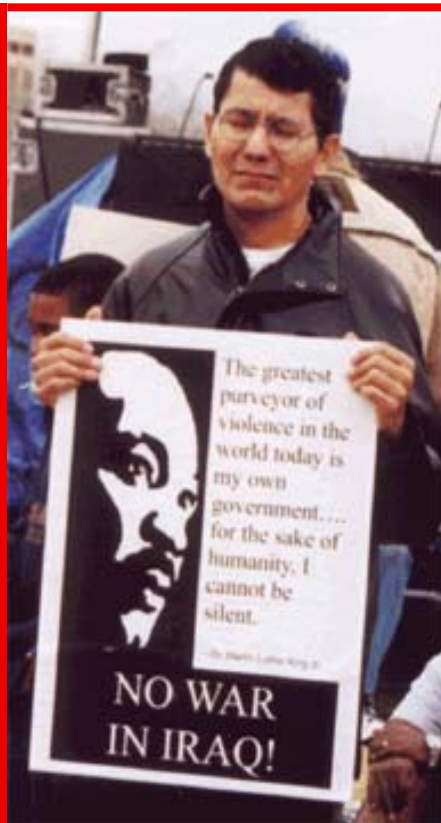


Former Phoenix City Councilman Calvin C. Good.

Continued on next page



Family (Girl Scouts)



Fate



Friends



Fraternity



Fashion

WebServices 4 All

Edited by: Angela Miller Brooks

Name: Robin L. Stanton

Business: WebServices 4 All

Title: Sole Proprietor

Type of Business: Website building along with marketing and advertising

Location: Baltimore, Maryland

Telephone: 410-404-9499

E-mail: robin@webservices4all.com

Web: www.webservices4all.com

Years in Business: Since 2002

Number of Employees: 0



Background? I graduated from Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania with a BS/BA in Communication Management and Business Administration. I've worked in the Internet Advertising Industry for approximately 5 years along with freelance writing for 2 years. I'm self taught in website design and have always enjoyed creativity, this is where the business stemmed from. I thought everyone out there should have a website for their customers to visit, to learn about and possibly purchase products. A website doesn't necessarily need to be a money generator, it just needs to be informative and kept up to date. Because everyone nowadays asks "Do you have a website," the answer should always be "Yes!" Businesses would be amazed to find out how many people they miss out on just because of lack of a website.

Target Market? My target audience is anyone with a business, small to a large corporation. I do specialize in the Minority and Women Owned Business area. There are more of these types of companies around than you can imagine. My focus is to help this audience get their name out there and with affordable prices. Just because you are a small business does not mean you should be held back because prices are too high. If WebServices 4 All can provide affordable prices, then it becomes a win-win situation for everyone. There are a lot of great businesses out there that people don't know about, simply because they do not have the time to sit and figure out a website, or have the time to track where all of their advertising is for the month. With the help of WebServices 4 All, the business owner can concentrate on selling or making their product while knowing that their site, advertising or marketing is in good hands.

Primary service? The main service is website design right now, I do have people interested in marketing and advertising but, website design seems to be the biggest attraction. WebServices 4 All likes to create nice, easy to navigate websites where consumers can find what they are looking for quickly.

Motivation? I wanted to be in a business where I could help people succeed. Also building websites does not really require any specific locale. As long as I have access to a computer and e-mail then, WebServices 4 All can run. I have always been somewhat of a night person. My work does not necessarily have to be done within a normal (8 to 5) business hours time frame. If I'm awake at 3 am and want to build a site, it can happen!

How is your service different from that of your competitors? WebServices differs because my service offers affordability. WebServices works with clients in developing affordable payment plans and in making everything a win/win situation. Clients will receive personalized service when working with me. After all, I'm the only one running the business. So, when current or potential clients contact WebServices, it will always be me who answers back.

WebServices continued on page 16

Choice One Mortgage Brokerage

by: Angela Miller-Brooks

Name: Tyronne Robertson

Business: Choice One Mortgage Brokerage Corporation

Type of Business: Mortgage Brokerage Branch

Title: Branch Manager

Location: 11024 N 28th St. Suite D 212
Phoenix, AZ.

Telephone: 602-734-0694

Fax: 602-734-0696

E-mail: mortgages4u@earthlink.net

Website: www.number1homelender.com



Product? Our company offers a variety of real estate mortgage loans, including residential and commercial. We assist with debt consolidation, real estate purchases and property refinancing. Even if a person has less than perfect credit, with debt consolidation, we can help.

Target market? Our target markets are those consumers seeking mortgage financing for purchasing, refinancing, residential and commercial real estate.

By what means did you acquire start up funding? I acquired funding for my business through personal savings and creative financing relationships.

How long did it take you to formalize your business? It didn't take very long at all. I'd say approximately three months. I was already in the business so it was a relatively easy transition.

What do you offer on your website? Our website offers helpful information for consumers, realtors and those who want to sell their homes themselves. For customer convenience we offer online applications as well.

How do you motivate employees? I motivate employees by empowering them with knowledge of the business and sharing with them some of my professional and sales philosophies that I've gained over the past 20 years. Also, I encourage them to continue to learn everything about the business.

Customer Base? We offer services to all individuals who are seeking competitive mortgage financing.

What excites you most about your company? Seeing my plans grow and come to fruition pleases me but, I am most excited about the opportunities to offer valuable services and resources to the Arizona community.

Company philosophy? Every customer is important. We always provide individuals with the best possible service and we always strive to be consistent and practice integrity every day.

Most memorable professional experience? My most memorable professional experience was the first time and, as a matter of fact, every time a customer has said thank you.

Choice 1 continued on page 16



Get It Together People Center

by: Angela Miller-Brooks

Name: Dorothy Wellington
Business: Get It Together People Center
Type of Business: Relationship and Personal Counseling
Title: Founder/ Director
Location: 4143 N. 12Th Street Suite 100-G
Phoenix, AZ. 85014
Telephone: 602-593-5903
Fax: 602504-1159
E-mail: dorothy789@earthlink.net
Years in Business: 8
Number of Employees: 0

Business Description? Get it Together People Center's primary focus is counseling. The Center's target's the counseling of men, women and couples with relation issues. Get It Together People Center helps people get past their individual hurts and pains. I am not a mental illness counselor but, I do work with those who display various degrees of depression and anxiety. I don't have any employees but, I do work with another counselor on a referral basis who specializes in youth counseling.

Background? For over 20 years I've been in education and helping others with their relationship and personal issues. I love to speak and to that end, I have been an Inspirational Speaker here in Phoenix since 1982. Get It Together People Center was founded in 1994. A year later, I majored in Christian Studies and Psychology from Grand Canyon University in 1995. I am a certified Adult Basic Education Instructor, have been a presenter of numerous workshops and conferences and am a licensed member of the clergy.

Location? I believe in being lead by a higher spirit that communicates with in one's thoughts. Therefore, I really didn't look specifically for my current office space nor its locale. However, when I became aware of it I found the complex to be central to many of my own needs as well as the needs of those who commute to see me. To be perfectly honest, one of the key determinate of my choosing this office space was its lease price. One really has to go where their budget dollars take them.

Marketing? I've done very little mass advertising. My business is generally spawned through word of mouth. To get my counseling center activated in the early years I would write special feature newspaper articles for the Arizona Republic and Arizona Informant newspapers as well as various singles magazines. One of my most recent marketing undertakings has been the development of my new book, "Spiritual Healing Beyond Religion". In the book, I highlight ways readers can gain invaluable insight and instruction in bring healing and restoration to their lives.

Business Focus? In this business one can very easily become overwhelmed. In the 80s I felt as if I was Mother Teresa. Now, as a director and counselor, I've learned how to focus on what I feel is important to client needs and to driving the business.

Get it together continued on page 17

**Arizona Africa Society
AZAfrica**



Presents for Black History Month

Africans Aboard the Cyber Spaceship

**February 17, 2003, 6:30 PM
Arizona State University West, La Sala Ballroom
4701 West Thunderbird Rd**

In Partnership with

Arizona Africa Society at Arizona State University West, AZAfrica at ASU West

Co-Sponsors: Associated Students of Arizona State University West, ASASUW; Arizona State University West's Campus Environment Team, CET; Arizona State University West's Multicultural Services

The Arizona Africa Society's 2003 Black History Month program honors the history and heritage of African mathematicians, scientists and inventors, a legacy dating from antiquity to cyber space. Our Keynote speaker, *Philip Emeagwali*, is an African who is aboard the cyber spaceship. His true stories of unsung heroes provide deeper insight into the world of African invention. His personal story is part of a heroic struggle for minority inclusion in the archives that record human achievement.



About the Keynote Speaker: Philip Emeagwali-A Father of the Internet

Philip Emeagwali is a mathematician and scientist with a humanitarian interest in Black history. He has overcome many adversities to reach success. His topic will focus on the contributions of people of African descent to the world in the areas of science and technology.

As a father of the internet, Philip Emeagwali views his inventions as but one example. He uses his mathematical and computer expertise to develop methods of extraction more petroleum from oil fields. It was his formula that used 65,000 separate computer processors to perform 3.1 billion calculations per second in 1989. That feat led to computer scientists comprehending the capabilities of supercomputers and the practical application of creating a system that allowed multiple computers to communicate. For this accomplishment he received the prestigious Gordon Bell Award.

You are invited to hear his story.

We believe you will be inspired!

Contact information for AZAfrica

Phone: 602-938-2207 Email: azafrica@azafrica.org Website: <http://www.azafrica.org>

Selling Products on the Internet

Special guest lecturer: SAM - Susan Allen Morgan, MFA

Website Designer, SAM of transnetmedia.com Answers Your Questions



Published author and public speaker Susan Allen Morgan, MFA, better known as SAM, is a true Website Design professional as the creator of transNET Media® LLC, a company that specializes in Website design. Susan holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Advertising Design from Syracuse University and a B.A in Art from New York State University at Buffalo. She has worked in the corporate world including Honeywell, Goodyear Aerospace and McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Company.

SAM has previously taught Computer-Photo Imaging and the Art of Web Site Design at Glendale Community College.

SAM's uses Macromedia's Director to create interactive training programs along with using Flash animation, PHP programs for database, along with Perl and now ASP. To know more about SAM and her business visit transnetmedia.com. She has been designing on the computer since 1988.

**www.transNET
Media.com
sam@transnet
media.com
602-494-7532**

How do I get a domain name?

There are many sites to register a domain name. The name or address is really rented for a length of time. This time is in years. The average price is \$25 a year. The best place to register your domain name is with the service provider that you have chosen to host your sites.

A required field on the registration form is a technical support provider. This refers to the service provider that you have chosen to host your site. This provides pointers to the proper domain name. If you do have your service provider register your domain name, it is important to make sure they enter you as the rightful owner.

What service does the host provide?

The host for your site will maintain a folder on a computer that is used for the World Wide Web. All the computers are networked and left on 24 hours a day. The host offers different packages as to size and provides the support of different programs that help your site function.

What is the cost of hosting?

Some offer free hosting, but it usually means you do advertising for them. Prices start at zero and go up from there. It is a monthly fee that is often offered with a yearly discount if paid by the year. It does pay to shop around. It isn't only about price, though. You want your service provider to give you the technical support you need. It also is a good idea to see how long they have been in business; check with the Better Business Bureau too. Internet companies come and go. The programmable support can be important if you want to do more than just put up a site -- like having a shopping cart, forms and password protected areas.

Is it a good idea to have your own server instead of using an ISP or using your computer as a server for hosting?

Only if you are computer savvy enough to be able to manage it. It does mean leaving your computer on all the time and you need to set up the proper programming behind it. If you are lucky enough to get a lot of hits, it will slow your computer down. As a designer, I recommend having an ISP do it.

What types of programming support for a site do you mean?

If you have a form on your site, it needs more HTML. It needs server support programs like Perl, C, Java and these go into a CGI-Bin. They take special requirements for setting up the hosting. These programs are server based. There are programs that are client based, which mean they stand alone on the site with HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). Javascripts do not need server support.

How do I know if I need this support?

If you know what you want to achieve with your site, then your designer should guide you to the best place to go for the programming support on a server. Supposing you want a shopping cart. It is best to define that to the amount of items you are going to sell and how you want to handle the shipping costs. If you have a question about your website email sam@transnetmedia.com.

Competition? My competition are other websites and one stop shop businesses out there.

How are you different? WebServices differs because my service offers affordability. WebServices works with clients in developing affordable payment plans, etc. Making everything a win/win situation. Clients will receive personalized service when working with me. After all I'm the only one running the business. So, when current or potential clients contact WebServices, it will always be me who answers back.

Pricing? I took it upon myself to investigate the rates of other small to large companies as to what they were charging for similar services. That's how I decided on the prices. Some people may say that I'm not charging enough, but my focus is to have a business that I enjoy and help people. Just like a store, if the price is affordable and the service is friendly people will return. That's how I would like clients to feel when they work with WebServices.

Startup? WebServices 4 All started a few months ago (November 2002) and the response has been great! A lot of interested people and several websites have already contacted me. I think that is a good start and I am very happy about the direction my business is going.

Key Message? Online marketing is no longer a fancy add-on; a solid web marketing plan is a necessary extension of your business and a vital link to your customers.

Marketing and advertising plans? Currently I market and advertise by e-mail; I find it saves time and money. I have a few Internet banners but, I haven't found exactly where I would like to run them.

What are you doing to change (in respect to marketing) as the economy has not gotten better? Even though the economy isn't doing well right now, I'll still stick with e-mails, press releases and phone work. These are great ways of getting information to the public and most of all they're all cost efficient.

Do you market your business or do you use an agency? I do all of my own marketing so far.



Business goal? To become a primary resources for consumers in Maricopa County who are seeking real estate financing.

Are you accomplishing your original business goal? Yes, however I have discovered that to be successful one has to be willing to modify one's business plan as the environment dictates.

Has the economy affected your business? Yes, definitely. With the tragic events of "9/11" and the subsequent poor performance in the stock market, have helped to fuel low mortgage interest rates. In addition, consumers are now realizing that their homes really are investments.

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~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

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Get it Together continued from page 13

Clientele? My clientele are primarily African Americans. I do see a small percentage of clients who are not but, most are African Americans. Although I most normally counsel women, men are beginning to inquire and seek out services. When I started the agency in 1994, there was certainly a stigma attached to African American's receiving counseling. I would hear things such as, "No, crazy people go in for counseling". Only recently have I seen a true change in the stereotypical behaviors and thoughts of African Americans and others toward seeking and receiving professional and emotional help. Upon my opening the agency I emphasized counseling for men and women. I am happy to say that my first client was an African American man.

Start up? I began with no money. I was limited to working with whatever cash I had on hand from week to week. Early on (the first 4 years), I applied for loan packages, vied for grants, developed proposals and even collaborated with other African American groups. Because the system is what it is, we'd get eaten alive by the larger organizations. Thereafter, I became frustrated. I took a long look at how I approached the business. I regrouped and now the agency is operating well through contracts and a client sliding scale payment program. Currently my payment structure works well for my clients and myself.

Competitive Edge? I don't like to think in terms of possessing a competitive edge over any individual in this field of service. I do believe that we all attract those who need our gifts of service. I would say that one of the things that makes me most unique in my field is that I look at things through a spiritual eye.

Value? I feel I am (Get It Together People Center) absolutely needed for this generation. A lot of people aren't being reached spiritually. That's needed in these days more it seems than in days gone by.

Business Impact? I feel I am making a difference and that I can have an impact on those who seek out my services. With road rage, high suicide rates, etc., people need someone or somewhere to turn to. My agency is very different from so many others. With many issues including high divorce rates, my first priority is not in getting the numbers down or even to stability. It's in keeping people alive.

Breakthrough Opportunity? Testimonials. They are my confirmations of a job well done. When someone is doing well and I hear about; that's a breakthrough opportunities for me. It's reinstatement that I'm in the right field.

The sessions will continue throughout the year on designated Thursday's each month. The information gathered from speakers and written comments will be recorded, compiled and reviewed. Based on the volume of the material, the Governing Board will decide how best to report back to the public.

Ten years ago, the Maricopa Community Colleges asked citizens how they would like to see their colleges grow. The district listened and the result has been the addition of 1.6 million square feet of classroom, learning and training facilities as well as new training programs and campus safety.

The first "Community Listening Session" is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on January 23, 2003 in the Navajo Room at Mesa Community College, 1833 W. Southern Avenue, (just north of U.S. 60 on Dobson Road). MCC and Chandler-Gilbert Community College host the event.

A complete list of the "Community Listening Sessions" is attached. It is also available to the public on the web at: www.dist.maricopa.edu/govbd/meetings.htm. Procedures for offering written comments in the event citizens cannot attend the event are also posted on this website.

Shari Lynn Himes to serve as the Interim Theater Manager for the Indiana State Museum



Filmmaker, Shari Lynn Himes, of the independent film company, Just Me Productions, Inc., will serve as the Interim Theater Manager for the Indiana State Museum (ISM) "Legacy Theater." Formerly known as the African American Living History Theater, the Legacy Theater will, through its mixture of traditional and interactive exhibits, combined with live theatrical performances, illustrate events related to Indiana's African American history.

While this is a departure from Himes' former film work, she is excited and enthused about her involvement with the ISM. "The way I see it I am a story teller. I have a great respect for the theater and feel strongly that the visual skills I have, from television and film, will translate nicely to the stage. When the position was offered I couldn't see why I would not accept it. I am looking forward to working with the museum."

Himes wrote, produced, and directed the seven time award winning short film, "A Song for Jade" (view trailer: <http://members.aol.com/sharilynnhimes/ln dex.html>). Himes is currently in development with a feature length film.

Why Advertise in The Ebony Cactus

Here is why you should advertise in The Ebony Cactus. Primarily, the Cactus is designed to connect you with your desired customers.

- 1. Demographics:** Part of the mission of The Ebony Cactus magazine is to showcase African American businesses to all who could use their services. The magazine's format is simple, open and easy to read. The content is focused on people and issues that will be both interesting and valuable to both small and large business. In this case, small business people include both those whose full time occupation is their business and those who may have a full time job, but work their own businesses on the side. These are large demographics. Free access to the magazine via the internet also works to increase the number of eyes viewing the magazine.
- 2. Capacity Building:** To "Build Capacity" is to increase a business' ability to do more and to overcome barriers to its growth. One way to accomplish this goal, is to build synergistic relationships with other successful firms and/or workers in an industry segment. The Ebony Cactus is a source of timely and comprehensive information about what African American businesses are doing and what services they offer. This information will give you the data you need to increase the capacity of your business and improve your ability to grow.
- 3. Building Bridges:** The Ebony Cactus is read by increasing numbers of companies seeking outsourcers, contractors and partners. Their readership further enhance your opportunities for growth.
- 4. A New Application of Established Technologies:** Unlike a web based Ezine, The Ebony Cactus does not dwell on the net. Instead, like any print magazine, is sent directly to the reader. There it resides on their computer desktop just as a newspaper would reside on the reader's kitchen table. From there the magazine can be read at any time. Macintosh and P.C. users can view it equally well. If so desired, copies can be made by the reader for their personal use. Add to this the ability to hyperlink (weblink) directly from the magazine. Now the direct link to your website can travel with The Ebony Cactus wherever it goes.

The Ebony Cactus magazine is a powerful source of potent information for small and large businesses alike. We encourage you to use this service and allow us to help your business grow. If you would like to know more, drop us a line at: publisher@TheEbonyCactus.com. Let us help you Make It Happen!

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